

Airport West Subarea Plan



**Approved Amendment to
2025 Lincoln/Lancaster County
Comprehensive Plan**

**As Adopted by
City Council on January 31, 2005
County Board on February 1, 2005**



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Executive Summary

The **Airport West Subarea Plan** is important to the future development of northwest Lincoln and to the community as a whole. This Subarea Plan identifies a number of transportation, infrastructure and land use changes as well as identifying potential partnerships for public service agencies. The approval of this Subarea Plan is critical in providing guidance for a number of private and public entities involved in future developments, infrastructure, and facilities in the subarea.

The community has an opportunity to provide a distinct impression of its desired future for this subarea. The vision of this Subarea Plan is one that retains residential character of the subarea, while providing for well planned industrial and employment opportunities, with timely provision of public infrastructure and services.

Major Elements of the Subarea Plan

Major accomplishments of the Airport West Subarea Plan include:

- ★ Identification of land for **new Industrial and Employment Center** along Interstate 80 centered on the NW 48th Street interchange. Nearly 800 acres north of I-80 are shown for future commercial and industrial uses in well planned and landscaped Industrial Park setting.
- ★ Continued development of the **Air Park West Industrial Park**, including potential new roadways and road alignments to better serve and facilitate development of this land by the Lincoln Airport Authority.
- ★ Identification of land suitable for a **public-private partnership to bring new housing** to the old "Huskerville" area at NW 48th and West Cuming in the near-term.
- ★ A preferred location west of NW 56th and south of West Adams for a **potential Joint-Use Facility**, that is under discussion with Lincoln Public Schools, Parks and Recreation, Lincoln City Libraries, Lincoln Housing Authority, and other agencies.
- ★ A **potential realignment of NW 48th Street**, from West Adams to West Cuming, to the east at NW 46th Street. This could provide a better transition to residential uses in Arnold Heights and allow better access and visibility for Air Park West commercial and industrial uses. The corridor also provides a better corridor for widening this street to 4 lanes in the future. A number of alignments were evaluated, and this plan contains the preferred alignment for NW 48th Street.
- ★ An alignment for **West Superior to West Cuming**, from NW 70th to NW 48th, concluding a study called for in the Comprehensive Plan.
- ★ A new minor arterial street, **NW 40th/38th Street**, from West "O" Street to US Highway 34, to provide better access and a potential route for truck traffic and service to Air Park West.
- ★ A new **Grade Separated Crossing** of Interstate 80 at NW 40th Street in order to provide additional access and movement within the subarea.

I. Introduction

A. Background

The community faces several important decisions regarding development in northwest Lincoln, in the area west of the Lincoln Airport – generally west of NW 27th Street, south of US Highway 34, north of US Highway 6 (West 'O' Street), and within the City's 25-year Future Service Limit. As a community there is the opportunity to review the subarea as whole, and determine what our goals are for the future of this subarea. The purpose of this Subarea Plan is to provide a vision for the desired future for this region, and to serve as a guide for review of future development proposals and timing of capital improvements.

B. Brief History of Subarea

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| 1942 | The Lincoln Army Air Field is built to meet military needs of World War II. The base closed in 1945 at the conclusion of the War. |
| 1952 | The Air Field is reactivated as the Lincoln Air Force Base under a joint-use agreement between the U.S. Air Force and the City of Lincoln. |
| 1959 | The City of Lincoln created the Lincoln Airport Authority and it assumed management of all city property used for airport or aviation purposes, including the U.S. Air Force Base. |
| 1966 | The U.S. Air Force Base was deactivated. The Lincoln Housing Authority assumed management of the former air base housing on the west side of NW 48 th Street. |
| 1970 | The Lincoln Housing Authority purchased all 1,000 units of military housing. |
| 1971 | The Lincoln Housing Authority platted the military residential area as the Arnold Heights Subdivision. |
| 1978 | The Olympic Heights Subdivision is platted to the south of Arnold Heights with 389 single-family homes. Green Prairie Heights Subdivision is platted to the west of Arnold Heights, but only a portion of the single-family homes are eventually built. |
| 1980 | The City of Lincoln prepared the Lincoln Municipal Airport Noise Control and Land Use Compatibility (ANCLUC) Study to recommend feasible and practical actions to minimize the aircraft noise impact in the airport vicinity and to ensure that land uses in the noise-affected areas are compatible with the degree of expected noise exposure. |
| 1980 | The Oak Hills Subdivision is platted, adjacent to Olympic Heights with 125 single family lots. |
| 1982 | The City Council adopts recommendations from the ANCLUC Study, and creates the Airport Environs Noise District to ensure compatible land uses in the Airport's surrounding environs through zoning overlay regulations. |

- 1994 In the 1994 Comprehensive Plan, the subarea was shown generally as Urban Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Public and Semi-Public, Parks and Open Space, and Agricultural.
- 1998 Cardinal Heights Subdivision is platted on the east side of NW 56th Street, north of West Holdrege Street with 209 single-family attached and detached homes, and 18 dwelling units in multiple-family structures.
- 1999 Hartland Homes Northwest Subdivision is platted on the east side of NW 56th Street, south of West Adams Street with 126 single-family detached homes.
- 1999 View Point West Subdivision is platted on the west side of NW 56th Street, south of West Adams Street with 183 single-family detached homes.
- 2000 City Council adopts the Greater Arnold Heights Area Neighborhood Plan as an approved subarea plan of the Comprehensive Plan. The Plan was undertaken by the Lincoln Housing Authority
- 2001 Ashley Heights Subdivision is platted on the east side of NW 48th Street, south of West Huntington with 294 single-family detached and attached homes.
- 2002 In the 2025 Comprehensive Plan, the land use plan identifies a Moderate to Heavy Industrial Center“ center on the north side of Interstate 80 in the general vicinity of NW 56th Street. The land use plan generally shows the subarea as Urban Residential, Industrial, Commercial, Green Space, and Public/ Semi-Public uses.
- 2002 The Lincoln Airport Authority initiated a Federal Aviation Regulation (F.A.R.) Part 150 Noise Compatibility Study to update the 1980 ANCLUC Study and Airport Environs Noise District zoning regulations.
- 2003 Hub Hall Heights Subdivision is platted on the east side of NW 48th Street, south of Ashley Heights with 349 single-family homes and 400 dwelling units in multiple-family structures.
- August 2004 The City Council adopts the F.A.R. Part 150 Noise Compatibility Study that updates the 1980 ANCLUC Study as an approved subarea plan of the Comprehensive Plan, and modifies the Airport Environs Zoning District to ensure that compatible land uses are maintained in the Airport’s surrounding environs through zoning overlay regulations.
- August 2004 The County Board adopts the F.A.R. Part 150 Noise Compatibility Study that updates the 1980 ANCLUC Study as an approved subarea plan of the Comprehensive Plan.
- October 2004 Hartland Homes Northwest 1st is platted on the west side of NW 48th Street, south of West Adams Street with 70 single-family attached homes.

C. Subarea Planning Process

Purpose

One important tool that is included in the Lincoln/Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan is the subarea planning process. The Comprehensive Plan states:

“Subarea plans offer greater details about the intended future of an area of the community - including land uses, infrastructure requirements, and development policies and standards.” (Page F 156)

D. Issues Yet to Address Section

The Subarea Plan outlines and answers the most relevant near-term issues but does not address all of the issues. Many issues are better addressed at the time of more specific development proposals such as a preliminary plat or use permit or design project, while other issues may never be addressed based upon relevancy. Nevertheless, these unanswered issues are identified under the heading “Issues Yet to Address.” The timely adoption of a Airport West Subarea Plan is critical to guide the continued development of this area.

E. Use of the Subarea Plan

The Subarea Plan is proposed for inclusion in the 2025 Lincoln/ Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan as an “Approved Plan.” The Comprehensive Plan includes the following definition of a subarea plan:

“Subarea Planning - for neighborhood or other small geographic areas - can address issues at a more refined scale than can be included in the Comprehensive Plan. Subarea plans may then become incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan through a formal adoption process. Subarea plans can serve as an official guide for elected decision makers, individuals and various City or County departments to promote improvements in the following areas such as: land use, housing, traffic, parks and recreation, public safety, infrastructure and the built and natural environment.” (Page F 34)

The Subarea Plan identifies issues and details for future decisions. The Plan also offers specific guidance as to how development and services should be accomplished within the area. A subarea plan should be used in the following circumstances:

- To assist in the review of annexations, preliminary plats, changes of zone, special permits or other development proposals in the area, even though all of the issues may not have been fully addressed and answered. The subarea plan will serve as a guide to private individuals who prepare development proposals and to public officials in the review of those propositions. The subarea plan is a tool intended to be used in concert with the regulations of the zoning and subdivision ordinances to guide development. While the Subarea Plan serves as an official guide for growth in an area, it does not have the same standing as adopted ordinances.

- To assist city and county agencies as they prepare infrastructure, service plans, and detailed design activities for the subarea.
- To assist in future subarea and land use planning activities.

F. Subarea Planning Challenges

The challenges posed by this Subarea Plan envelope issues of both **process** and **substance**. Several related planning processes are complete, ongoing or planned for the future and will eventually need to be incorporated into and possibly amend the substantive elements of the existing Comprehensive Plan or this Subarea Plan. The specific challenges are:

- Recognize the existence of a community-wide planning effort that developed the Greater Arnold Heights Area (GAHA) Neighborhood Plan in 1999. This plan is an approved component of the Comprehensive Plan. This Subarea Plan does not replace the GAHA Neighborhood Plan.
- Recognize the Northwest Tier Study whose task is to evaluate future urban growth areas to determine where and when urban services infrastructure (i.e., roads, water lines, sewer lines, etc.) associated with future development should be provided. No timeline has been determined for the initiation of the Northwest Tier Study.
- Recognize the need to undertake a community-wide planning effort whose task is to explore the protection and enhancement of the City's entryways. The entryway study has not been initiated.
- Recognize efforts undertaken by the Lincoln Airport Authority, the City of Lincoln and Lancaster County to ensure compatible land uses in the Airport Environs Noise District. The Lincoln Airport Federal Aviation Regulation (FAR) Part 150 Study is an approved component of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Recognize efforts being undertaken by the Lincoln Airport Authority to develop the Lincoln Air Park West Industrial Park, a 600 acre industrial and employment center served by Interstate 80, US Highway 34, US Highway 6, rail and air service.

II. Land Use

A. Comprehensive Plan Principles and Strategies

The current Comprehensive Plan already provides significant guidance as the community's values on future development. The principles and strategies of the Plan encourage:

- ◆ *The community will strive to provide future employment areas that meet the needs of existing businesses and identify emerging industry clusters. (Page F 12)*
- ◆ *Preserve and enhance entryway corridors into Lincoln and Capitol View Corridors. (Page F 19)*
- ◆ *Make "green space" an integral part of all environments. (Page F 57)*
- ◆ *Integrate the "Core Resource Imperatives" and natural resources feature concepts into future city and county studies that implement the Comprehensive Plan. (Page F 63)*
- ◆ *Promote the preservation, maintenance and renovation of existing housing and neighborhoods throughout the city, with special emphasis on low and moderate income neighborhoods. Maintain and enhance infrastructure and services in existing neighborhoods. (Page F 68)*
- ◆ *Continue the City's growth policy of contiguous urban growth. Urban development will occur in areas immediately abutting the city that reflect a logical and timely extension of urban infrastructure. (Page F 75)*
- ◆ *Extend the bicycle and trails system into the new neighborhoods as the city grows. Connections should be made to schools, parks, and other activity areas. (Page F 94)*
- ◆ *Continue to provide for a high level of access to the Airport terminal and associated facilities. (Page F 123)*
- ◆ *Encourage cooperative planning and site development between the City and public and private educational institutions. (Page F 145)*
- ◆ *The City and the County will work cooperatively in as many areas as possible in order to provide services in the most efficient manner possible. (Page F 147)*
- ◆ *Infrastructure improvements should be made concurrent with development. Except in limited cases, such improvements should not be made in advance of development proposals in an area. There should be adequate infrastructure in place every year to accommodate housing and employment demands. (Page F 149)*
- ◆ *New urban development should be timed so that there is adequate school capacity in the developing area. (Page F 150)*

The current Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Plan is shown in the **Figure 1**. It provides a general guide for development with the understanding that a more detailed subarea plan would be developed for this area. The Subarea Plan (**see Figure 2**) is intended to provide a more detailed vision for the Airport West area.

B. Vision for the Airport West Subarea

The vision of the subarea plan is to:

- **Provide for Future Industrial/Employment Centers:** clarify and refine areas designated for commercial and industrial uses.
- **Efficient Use of Transportation Network:** land use decisions must consider the impacts on the transportation network. The proposed land uses are scaled to the capacity of future land uses and to retain the community's desire for these roads. NW 48th Street is not just a road used by local residents, it is an arterial street that serves the whole community and region. The traffic flow capacity of this corridor should not be overloaded.
- **Provide Guidance to Public and Private Service Providers:** encourages cooperative planning and site development for all levels of public and private entities regarding the provision of community services in the subarea.
- **Provide Effective Land Use Transitions:** identifies appropriate transitions from commercial to residential land uses. Within commercial areas, office and lower intensity commercial uses along with appropriate buffer areas should be developed as a transition to adjacent residential areas. In some areas, "related-residential" uses may be located to adjacent lower density residential uses, such as churches, domiciliary care facilities, retirement apartments, child care facilities or townhomes.
- **Promote Desirable Entryways:** standards for landscaping and architecture should be developed to promote a desirable entryway into Lincoln along Interstate 80, US Highway 34, and US Highway 6 (West 'O' Street) — however, standards alone will have little impact if land use decisions strip the area with commercial uses, signs and improvement and widening of roadways in the subarea.

The Subarea Plan includes significant land use modifications. In summary they include:

- ◆ **Clarify the general boundaries of two Industrial/ Employment Centers in the subarea:** this Subarea Plan designates the area generally a quarter mile south of West Holdrege, between NW 63rd and NW 27th Streets; and the Air Park West Industrial Park as industrial/ employment centers. This Subarea Plan encourages these industrial/ employment areas to develop as a planned center. Combined, these areas account for over a 1,000 acres of undeveloped industrial land.
- ◆ **Promote coordinated planning for public and private community services:** this Subarea Plan recommends that a joint-use facility be located west of NW 56th Street and south of West Adams Street. A potential joint-use facility is already under discussion with Lincoln Public Schools, Parks and Recreation, Lincoln City Libraries, Lincoln Housing Authority, and other public agencies.

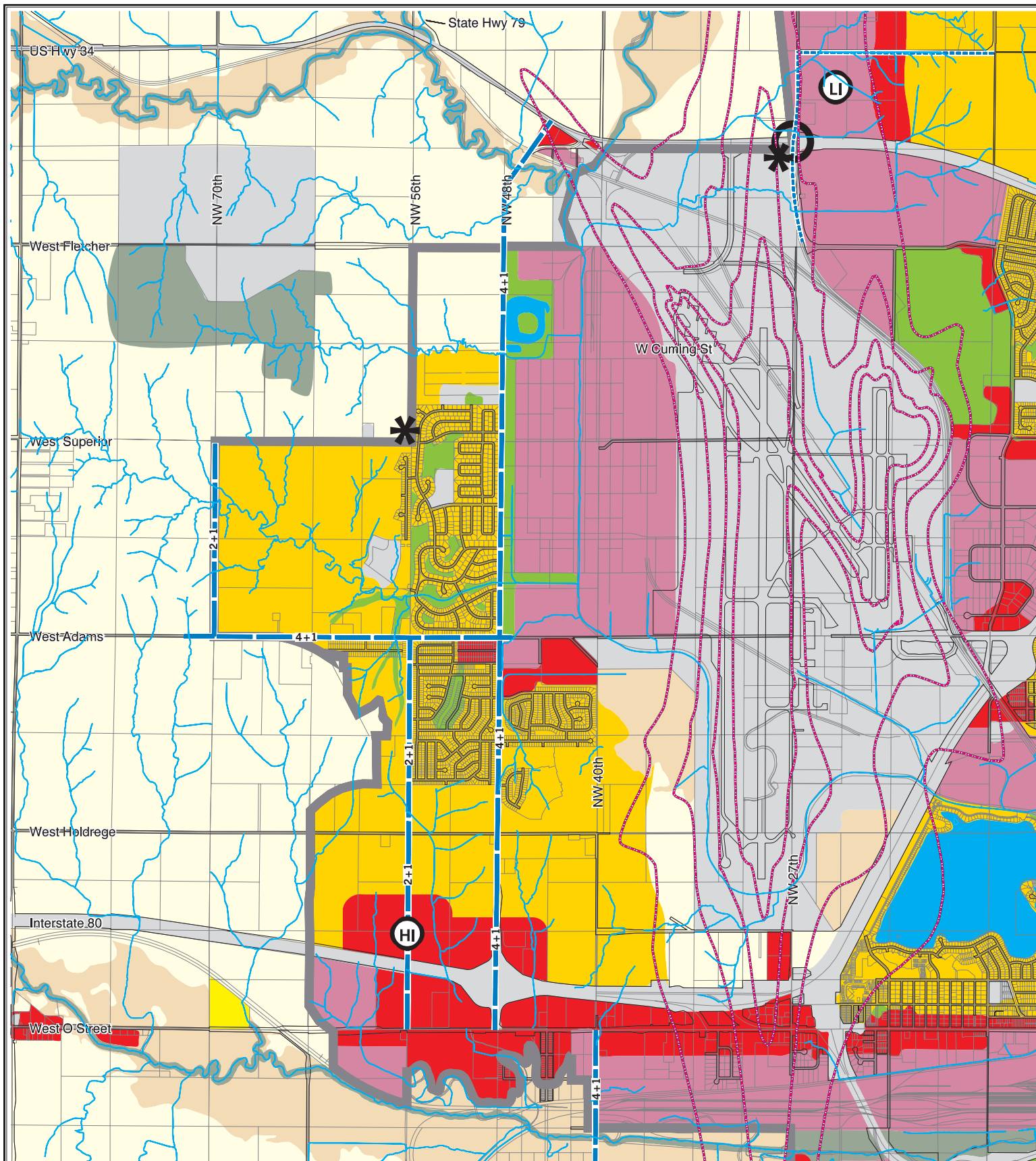
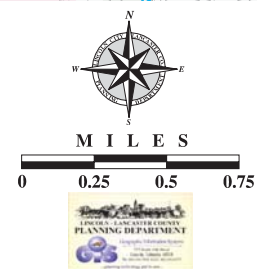


Figure 1: EXISTING COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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| Urban Residential | Environmental Resources | --- Airnoise DNLs |
| Low Density Residential | Agricultural | ○ Potential Intersection Improvement |
| Commercial | Agricultural Stream Corridor | X Future Road Closing |
| Industrial | Future Service Limit | ✱ Study |
| Green Space | --- Arterial Street (Proposed) | ○ New Proposed Comm or Indus Centers |
| Public and Semi-Public | --- Collector Street (Proposed) | ○ (Not Site Specific) |
| Lakes and Streams | --- New Local Road | |



C. Specific Elements of Subarea Plan

The existing residential character of this subarea must be respected. As undeveloped properties are developed as urban residential, commercial, industrial or public uses, it is imperative to provide for appropriate transitions with residential uses. **Figure 2**, the Airport West Subarea Plan reflects the following text and land use descriptions.

- **Commercial Transition:** Within commercial areas, office and lower intensity commercial uses should be developed as a transition to adjacent residential areas. Light and Moderate Industrial and Employment Centers, only with additional buffers, landscape screening, site and building arrangements, open space and/or other appropriate techniques may be appropriate for some of these areas. These transition areas may be developed with varying depths, spacing and flexibility with adjacent residential areas. Commercial areas along major roadways should develop under the provisions of the General Commercial District (H-4) zoning standards. In the subarea, these areas are located in the following areas:
 - Quarter mile south of W. Holdrege, generally between NW 63rd and east of NW 40th Streets to the Airport property; and,
 - Quarter mile east of NW 40th, north and south of W. Holdrege
 - East of NW 48th Street, West Adams to West Cuming
- **Industrial/ Employment Centers:** these areas would be developed to support targeted industry sectors. Sites should be sized to accommodate a single facility up to 200 acres. The five target industries include:
 - 1.) Biotechnology;
 - 2.) Value-Added Agriculture;
 - 3.) Specialty Electronics;
 - 4.) Technical Customer Support; and,
 - 5.) Logistics/ Distribution/ Warehousing.

The provision of interstate and highway access, rail and air service, and large tracts of unbuilt land makes a new industrial park within this subarea an important part of local, regional and national economic development efforts for the community. In addition, within these areas, service commercial uses focused toward highway/ interstate travelers and the general public may also be appropriate. These areas should be developed under the provisions of the Industrial Park District (I-2), Employment Center District (I-3), or General Commercial District (H-4) zoning standards. Examples of these developments include the Horizon Business Park (I-3), and the Chamber of Commerce Industrial Park (I-2). In the Subarea Plan, these areas are identified as:

- Air Park West Industrial Park, east of NW 48th Street, US Highway 34 to West Adams; and; North of Interstate 80, generally a 1/4 mile south of West Holdrege Street, between NW 63rd and NW 27th Streets.